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(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTHENTICATING DOCUMENTS
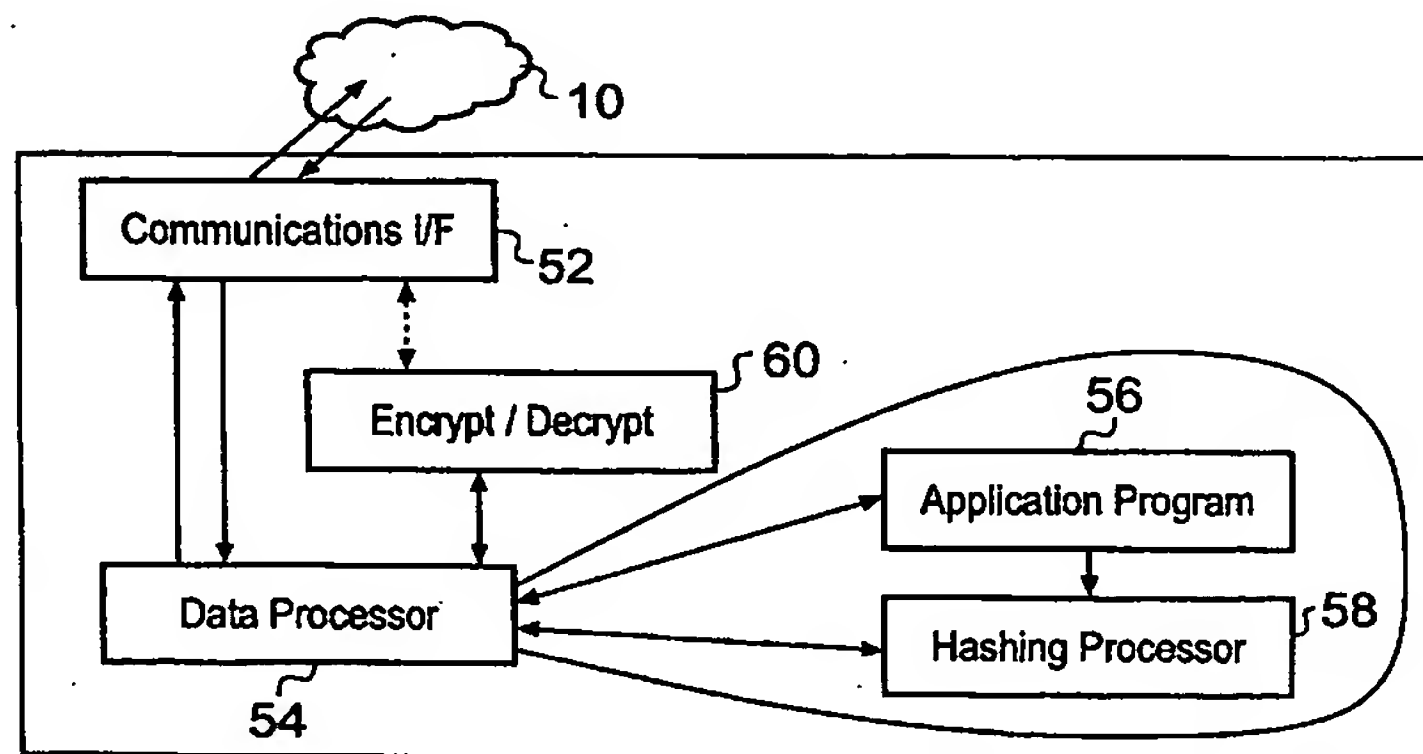
(57) Abstract: A data processing system for distributing and authenticating documents from a plurality of parties to a recipient data processing apparatus. The system comprises a plurality of document distribution devices each being operable to generate an original hash value from the content of a file containing a document to be distributed. A recipient data processing apparatus is operable to receive the original hash values from each of the plurality of document distribution devices. The recipient data processing apparatus is operable to generate an original super hash value from the plurality of the original hash values received, and to distribute the original super hash value to each of the document distribution devices. The system for distributing documents can provide an increased assurance that documents to be distributed have not been tampered with during communication or by an unscrupulous distributing party or by an unscrupulous recipient. The improvement is provided in part by only submitting a hash value of the document to be distributed. The hash value ensures that the eventual recipient of the document can be assured that no changes to the document have been made. Furthermore, by forming the super hash value, all parties, which are distributing documents, can be assured that none of the other parties have altered their documents, or that these have not been altered on the recipient side.